



# The Pipeline

## CFC Quality Central Active Duty Employees

By Natalie Ciresi, CFC Communications

With the war waging on in Iraq and fear of terrorist threats on the home front, many military reserve and National Guard members have been called to active duty. These include some of our colleagues in the Cabinet for Families and Children. We would like to honor the following Quality Central employees who are now on military leave, and would welcome information about others.

March 2003 marked 27 years of state employment for **Debbie Buffin**. She couldn't celebrate the anniversary with her colleagues in Frankfort, though, because she had been called to active duty at Fort Knox in February.

Buffin is a specialist 4<sup>th</sup> class with the 141<sup>st</sup> Personnel Detachment of the Kentucky National Guard.

"Debbie is an essential member of Quality Assurance," said Eric Petty, section supervisor for Quality Assurance in the Office of the Ombudsman. "This realization hits home when a situation like the military call-up occurs. Sometimes you don't realize how much a person is needed until they're gone."

Buffin is an office coordinator for the Office of the Ombudsman. In her time with the Commonwealth, she has worked in the Division of Child Care, Aging Services and Disability Determinations Services.

"We all miss having Debbie here with us," Petty said. "We're hopeful she's able to return to us soon. This too is our hope for all our service personnel."

**Chris Smith**, director of procurement services in the Office of Program Support, has been a part of the Air Force since graduating from high school. After an initial four years on active duty, part of which he spent in England, he teamed up with the Air Force Reserves.

Smith is currently stationed at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio. He is a master sergeant with the 445<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing's operations group.



## Employee wellness program, walk begin this month

By Anya Armes Weber, CFC Communications

Cabinet staff are invited to join CHS employees at their Wellness Program kickoff later this month.

At 10 a.m. Monday, April 28, in the CHS lobby, Commissioner for Health Services Rice Leach will lead the beginning lap for "Walk Across Kentucky," an employee walking competition.

The 12-week competition involves teams of six people who will log their walking miles. Walkers can walk anytime, anywhere, alone or with friends. Team leaders must report miles walked to CHS staffer Jennye Grider each week. Grider will track team progress on a state map.

To sign up your team for "Walk Across Kentucky," e-mail Grider or bring your team roster to the kickoff April 28.

The Wellness Program is sponsored by CHS' Employee Worksite Wellness Committee, whose mission is to establish and maintain a workplace that encourages environmental and social support for a healthy lifestyle. The group is planning several other events this year, including yoga classes, cafeteria cookouts and a lesson in stress management.

April 16, 2003  
Volume 2003, Issue 14

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## Annual report features research results

By Mike Jennings, CFC Communications

A new report shows that foster parents and other clients of the Cabinet for Families and Children rate highly the services they receive.

Those findings form part of the broadest overview yet compiled of the impact of Kentucky's social services. "All Families Matter 2002," the Cabinet's third annual report on service outcomes, also includes detailed regional data on child abuse, adoption, child support and other key indicators.

The report's section on research initiatives contains results from a customer satisfaction survey of foster parents, other clients and partners of the Cabinet, and Cabinet employees. It also contains findings from the first phase of a census of all children in Kentucky foster care.

In the survey, average satisfaction with Cabinet services was 77 percent among foster and pre-adoptive parents, 73 percent among other clients and 66 percent among "community partners"—groups that address the same or similar client needs as the Cabinet. The average satisfaction score for Cabinet employees was 76 percent, but employee ratings varied widely across survey questions and service regions.

The foster care census began in fall 2002 with visits to 2,338 state-approved foster and pre-adoptive homes. The census takers saw all the foster children placed in those homes and collected information on their well-being and on foster parents' needs.

Most foster parents said a worker visited their home at least monthly, and most said they got adequate help for any foster children in their homes who had special needs. The census will continue with foster children who are in private child care, relatives' homes and other states.

The annual report shows positive trends on several indicators of child safety and well-being. Substantiated cases of repeat

abuse or neglect of children declined from 1998 through 2001; the number of families receiving child care subsidies has risen dramatically; and paternity establishments, child support orders and dollar collections of child support have all increased steadily.

During 2002, the Cabinet met its goals for increasing adoptions, improving stability in foster care (as measured by the percent of foster children who had no more than two placements within a year) and increasing child support orders and collections for children in foster care. But it remains far short of a goal for those foster children who cannot safely be returned to their homes—achieving adoption for at least 32 percent of them within two years of the time they enter foster care.

The report also provides insight into welfare families' efforts to achieve self-sufficiency. It shows that the percent of adults in the Kentucky Transitional Assistance Program (K-TAP) has grown steadily, to 19 percent in 2002; that short-term financial assistance has helped a growing number of families avoid welfare dependency; and that a growing number of K-TAP clients are receiving help with domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health and learning problems.

For the Cabinet's 16 service regions, "All Families Matter 2002" introduces a new level of accountability by detailing each region's performance on 16 indicators listed in the Cabinet's strategic plan.

Cabinet Secretary Viola Miller called the report a further step toward providing legislators and the public with enough evidence to enable them to judge how well her agency serves vulnerable citizens.

"It's one thing to dedicate ourselves to attaining the best possible outcomes for the families and children we serve," she said. "It's quite another to produce the evidence of our success. The first is called good intentions; the second, accountability."

The entire report can be accessed at the Cabinet's website, <http://cfc.state.ky.us/>.

## Administrative professionals invited to conference

By Anya Armes Weber, CFC Communications

Wednesday, April 23 is Administrative Professionals Day.

Secretaries, administrative assistants and support staff are invited to the Administrative Professionals Annual Conference next Wednesday at Frankfort's Holiday Inn Capital Plaza.

The conference includes workshops on stress relief and workplace bullies, as well as a keynote speech from former Gov. Martha Layne Collins and an award presentation to the local administrative professional of the year.

Cost is \$40 for workshops and lunch or \$20 for the luncheon. Call 875-1481 for registration forms or more information. Registration is due by Monday, April 21.

Also on Wednesday, say thank you to your office's hardworking secretaries and administrative assistants for the contributions they make.

## EAL Bright Idea of the Week

By Anya Armes Weber, CFC Communications



While most Cabinet staff have completed the Everyone a Leader skill-building sessions, we could all use small reminders of the lessons we studied. The "EAL Bright Idea of the Week" features tips that can help us improve our relationships with coworkers and our service to families.

Avoidance is one pitfall of customer service. This includes avoiding the customer and/or the situation. A problem will not go away by not dealing with it. In difficult situations, face-to-face communication instead of phone calls or e-mail will enhance our professionalism. Tackle a problem before it gets worse for you and your client.

## CFC staff walk for healthy babies

By Anya Armes Weber, CFC Communications



*Melinda Buffin and Cabinet March of Dimes campaign coordinator Michele Lilly, both of the Administrative Hearings Branch, stretch before Friday's walk.*



*"Power walkers" Janie Johnson and Mark Bengel of OTS stride ahead of all CFC walkers to complete their loop around the Capital grounds.*



*About 65 CFC employees walked to help reduce prematurity Friday.*

Last week's rain gave way to sunshine last Friday as about 65 Cabinet staff joined other state employees in walking to help reduce premature births at the March of Dimes State Walk.

First lady Judi Patton kicked off the event at the Capital. "Let us remember as we walk through the breeze that through our deeds we are providing our smallest citizens the same opportunity," she said.

In 2001, more than 476,000 babies were born prematurely. The Cabinet's fund-raising efforts will help programs to educate women to get healthy before they get pregnant, as well as fund research to reduce prematurity.

Cabinet March of Dimes campaign coordinator Michele Lilly wore a button featuring the face of her young nephew, Alex.

Six years ago, Alex was born prematurely, weighing 3 lbs., 14 oz. Lilly said she knows firsthand the effects of having the neonatal intensive care unit's technology to support Alex's health.

"The CFC staff walking today are making a difference so babies like Alex can grow up healthy and strong, Lilly said. "Better yet, we are helping March of Dimes reduce the rate of prematurity among mothers."

Results from the fund-raising will be announced later this month.

Thanks to everyone who walked and donated to help babies!



## Next live chat on CFS Forum is Monday

By Anya Armes Weber, CFC Communications

Good news often seems better once it's shared. Likewise, the resources staff discover become more valuable once more customers can be helped by them.

April's live chat on the CFS Forum is all about hidden resources.

On Monday, April 21, Cabinet staff and other Comprehensive Family Services partners will discuss finding and creating resources. Are there grants out there for the getting? Or a newer agency that staff may not have heard about yet? Share those resources, or a story about building your own resource, with your statewide counterparts.

The discussion begins at 2 p.m. Eastern time. You must register to post a comment or question, and registering is easy. Anyone – staff and community partners -- can log on the site to read comments. Postings will remain online for staff who can't attend the discussion.

Bookmark the CFS Forum: <http://cfc.state.ky.us/cfsforum/>. Log on next Monday to help someone or to get ideas of your own.



## Celebrate 33<sup>rd</sup> Earth Day with easy tips

By Anya Armes Weber, CFC Communications

Earth Day is Tuesday, April 22, and here are a few ways we can be kind to the environment then and every day.

### At work

- Share documents electronically rather than making multiple copies.
- Use e-mail rather than messenger mail when ever possible.
- Reuse office paper. Turn over those first drafts and use them for notes. Toss them in the recycling bin when you're all done with them.
- Make two-sided copies.
- Take a car-free day. Carpool or choose mass transportation to lessen pollution.
- Bring your own coffee mug to work and reuse it daily rather than using disposable paper or Styrofoam.
- Carry a plastic bag on your way into work or during your afternoon walk and pick up trash.
- Look for the "recycle" symbol when you order office supplies. Notebooks and papers made with recycled fibers are as good quality as virgin varieties.

### At home

- Plant a tree in your yard, or join with your community to plant one the entire neighborhood will enjoy. Be sure to call your local utility company before you dig.
- Plant a wildlife-friendly garden to attract and support native wildlife. Choose native species of plants and avoid pesticides.
- Collect condensation from your home's air conditioning system and use it to water plants.
- Join your city or county recycling program.
- Try a creative gift wrap rather than buying new wrapping paper. Use newspaper or comics, leftover wallpaper, cloth or an old map for a one-of-a kind present.
- When you have several errands to run, make them in one trip rather than heading out in your car several times a day. Better yet, ride your bike or walk to your destination.

## FRYSCs office accepting award applications for top centers

By Anya Armes Weber, CFC Communications

The Office of Family Resource and Youth Services Centers (FRYSCs) is accepting nominations for the 2002-2003 Harry J. Cowherd Award for Center Excellence.

The awards go to the family resource and youth services centers that demonstrate a clear adherence to the educational mission of the FRYSC program, implementation of innovative programs, successful implementation of all core components and value placed on school, community and parental involvement in center activities.

One family resource center (FRC), one youth services center (YSC), and one combined family resource and youth services center (FRYSC) will be selected to receive the awards.

This year, the nomination process will be separate from the application process, FRYSC Staff Assistant Michael Denney said.

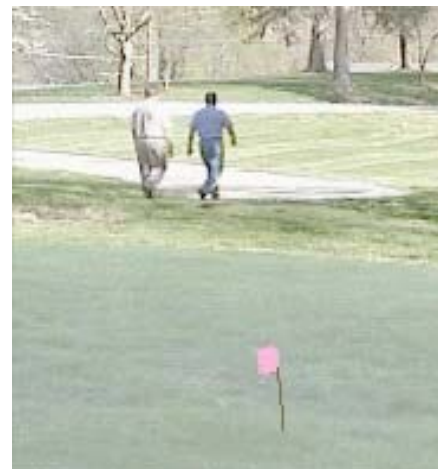
Nominations are due by April 30. After one-page nominations are submitted, FRYSCs staff will contact the nominated centers and invite them to submit an award application.

Awards will be presented to winners this fall, Denney said.

No self-nominations from center employees will be accepted. Nominations may be from superintendents, principals, teachers, other school district personnel, FRYSC Advisory Council members, parents, students, district supervisors, community partners, school partners, legislators and other FRYSC coordinators.

To download a nomination form, log onto <http://cfc.state.ky.us/frysc/HJC%20Page.htm>.

For more information about the awards or to submit a nomination, contact Tonya Cookendorfer of the FRYSCs office at [tonya.cookendorfer@mail.state.ky.us](mailto:tonya.cookendorfer@mail.state.ky.us) or (859) 654-1289.



*A small flag designates the spot where a tree will be planted later this month in celebration of Cabinet and community efforts to protect children from abuse.*

## Tree will commemorate child protection efforts

By Anya Armes Weber, CFC Communications

Staff are invited to a tree dedication ceremony later this month in recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month.

At 10 a.m. on Tuesday, April 29, Secretary Viola Miller will dedicate a tree to celebrate the protection of children. The event is sponsored by Quality Central Connections.

The tree will be planted behind the CHR building, near the patio and walking path. The spot is marked with a small pink flag.

Protecting children from abuse is a collaborative challenge that we all have a hand in at work and in our own communities. All Cabinet staff are encouraged to celebrate our efforts at the dedication.